

NEWCOMER YOUTH AND BELONGING: COMMUNITY-BASED ARTS PRACTICE

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RATIONALE/PRACTICE CONCERNS/RELATION TO P2P THEME

- ▶ National research theme-social and cultural integration of immigrants in Canada
- ▶ Collaborate-St. John's high school hosting sizeable representation of immigrant and refugee students
- ▶ Engage immigrant and refugee students in after-school Open Studio group process
- ▶ Run weekly-11 weeks
- ▶ Curate artwork collaboratively with participants for exhibition

RESEARCH TEAM AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- ▶ Dr. Leah Lewis, Assistant Professor, counselling education
- ▶ Dr. Heather McLeod, Associate Professor, art education, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programs
- ▶ Dr. Xuemei Li, Associate Professor, second language education, newcomer integration
- ▶ Holy Heart of Mary Regional High School-largest, most culturally diverse. Comprehensive programming for new Canadians supports diverse learning. Guidance counselor and program personnel: Literacy Enrichment and Academic Readiness for Newcomers, Settlement Worker in Schools, English as a Second Language
- ▶ RA 1 OS programming. Student members HHM's youth leadership program assist
- ▶ RA 2 participates/guides intercultural communication

- ▶ Community collaborative perspective (Participatory Action Research PAR informed), using arts based process (Leavy, 2009)
- ▶ Grounded in intercultural communication models and Open Studio theory, themes of inclusion and belonging
- ▶ Plain language needs assessment, semi-structured interviews and focus group

OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Adler-experiences of belonging inform functioning and community cohesion (Eleniak et al., 2016)
- ▶ Immigrant and refugee students explore where and how they belong in the Newfoundland and Canadian context
- ▶ Gather information on students' experiences of belonging explored via the Open Studio group process

WHY OPEN STUDIO WITH IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE YOUTH?

- ▶ NL strong sense of culture, community, and place. Newcomers experience tangible and potentially difficult insider/outsider dynamic (Anderson, 2012; Lepawsky, Phan, & Greenwood, 2010)
- ▶ St. John's homogeneous population 1.9% self-identify as a visible minority (compare to 16.2% nationally) (Statistics Canada, 2006)
- ▶ 2014 majority of 317 provincially-sponsored economic immigrants-Philippines, China, India (Provincial Nominee Program Fact Sheet 2014)

- ▶ 2016 ANC welcomed/resettled 261 GARs arriving in NL, 167 from Syria
<http://www.ancnl.ca/userfiles/files/GAR%20Update%20-%20January%20to%20November%202016.pdf>
- ▶ Racism-negative effect on refugee youth (Baker, 2013). Feel unwelcome; nearly 40% of visible minority high school students experience racism from peers (Baker, Price, & Walsh, 2015)
- ▶ Programs in some schools to alleviate stress levels but few counseling services address newcomer social connections and belonging (Li, 2016)

- ▶ Language-significant barrier for immigrant refugee youth integration (Burnaby 2010; Sarma-Debnath & Castano, 2008)
- ▶ Visual art-universal accessibility-non-verbal expression. Students safely explore how and where they experience belonging. Emerging imagery and themes help foster resiliency

OPEN STUDIO

Open Studio community-based arts (OS/CBA), public space-group, individuals engage through art making

- ▶ Collaborative community development and Adlerian theory (Adler, 1932; John, 2011), social justice and feminist models
- ▶ Community building strategy
- ▶ Inclusive (Timm-Bottos & Reilley, 2015), process-oriented, not reliant on common language, developmental (Moon, 2009), facilitates access and ignites community engagement, social action and therapeutic lens (Timm-Bottos, 2014)

- ▶ OS/CBA-Universities and/with community groups/marginalized neighbourhoods (Eleniak et al., 2016; Timm-Bottos & Reilley, 2015)
- ▶ Personal, communal, economic, social and educational development (Newman et al, 2003)
- ▶ Confidence from skill development
- ▶ Social cohesion-friendship/exchange with multiple and diverse levels of experience and identity

- ▶ Marginalized youth-increased senses of identity and inclusion:
- ▶ Improved academic performance
- ▶ Proactive seeking of other community engagement-part-time jobs, team sports, volunteerism
- ▶ Language acquisition/nuance of interpersonal exchange-social, emotional, descriptive (Newman et al., 2003; Yalom, 2005)

- ▶ Adler-valued experiences create value and confidence of self (1932), a grounded sense of belonging
- ▶ Bettner and Lew (1990) crucial 'Cs':
- ▶ *connected* with others,
- ▶ *competent* in skills and ability to take responsibility,
- ▶ *we count* or are valued and
- ▶ cope with challenging or stressful experience, by possessing *courage*

- ▶ Canadian immigrants Pearce (2008), a generalized trust of population in new country may not lead to a significant sense of belonging, however a particularized trust of one's neighbours or group can do so
- ▶ When building blocks of feeling connected aren't fostered the following suffer:
 - ▶ relational health
 - ▶ respect for the broader community (Croucher, 2009)
 - ▶ personal functioning (Reitmanova & Gustafson, 2009)

THE PROCESS

- ▶ OS 7 parameters:
- ▶ *focus on intentional art making*
- ▶ *no judgmental commentary (positive or negative)*
- ▶ *non evaluative in nature*
- ▶ *no forced participation*
- ▶ *witnessing*
- ▶ *sharing*
- ▶ *participatory involvement of facilitators (Eleniak et al., 2016)*

- ▶ Presence-a form of participation (Leavy, 2009; McNiff, 1998)
- ▶ Self-witnessing own process-journaling or quiet reflection – artwork a catalyst for writing
- ▶ Individuals choose to participate
- ▶ Sharing finished artworks via participant-planned events

METHODOLOGY

- ▶ Participatory Action Research (PAR):
- ▶ collaborative-participants included in various stages, including collecting and reporting data (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011)
- ▶ needs/solutions identified/fostered within the community

- ▶ PAR works with arts based research (ABR). Both approaches rely on emerging themes via collaborative creative process (Leavy, 2009; McNiff, 1998)
- ▶ Recruitment by guidance counsellor/teaching/supporting staff/student leaders

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

- ▶ Initial needs assessment, 2 focus groups, visual art, semi-structured interviews. Triangulation (visual, verbal and interactional modes-what can not be expressed in one mode may be expressed in another)
- ▶ Needs assessment-emergent themes applicable to semi-structured interviews and focus groups
- ▶ One focus group at end of project
- ▶ Ten individual semi-structured interviews
- ▶ Initial data analysis-involve participants-make sense of art work
- ▶ Thematic analysis of transcript data-coding software
- ▶ Research team meets regularly-themes during data collection and earlier stages of analysis



▶ Thanks!

▶ Questions?

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